

October 26, 2023

Dear CSD Parents and Community,

The tragedy that has unfolded in LewistonAuburn overnight is horrific and truly difficult to comprehend. Our hearts go out to the Lewiston/Auburn community and the many who have lost loved ones during this senseless act of violence. We recognize these events make us all think critically about our own community's safety. When there are acts of violence in our world, we tend to take a more critical look at what is happening within our community and school to ensure safety.

School safety remains an important topic in schools throughout our region, state, and country. Our own schools as well as all schools across the state have done a lot to focus on safety. We have ongoing reviews of our emergency plans, practice drills, and have open communication with local emergency responders about improving school safety. Most importantly, we understand the importance of connection, relationships, and sense of belonging for our students, staff, and community as a whole. We are intentional about our school climate and work to create a safe, welcoming climate for all students.

You and your children may be impacted by the recent events in unexpected ways. Events like this can surface emotions that surprise us. You may find that your children have questions that you yourself are struggling to answer. Below are links that you may find helpful to help guide a discussion with your children, based on developmental needs and ages.

Our school guidance counselors, social workers, and administrators are standing by should you or your child need someone to talk with. Please contact us directly by calling the school or reaching out through email.

Sincerely,

Tricia Campbell, BRHS principal tcampbell@aos98schools.org

Shawna Kurr, BRES principal skurr@aos98schools.org

Tammy Blackman, LCSW tblackman@aos98schools.org

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Kim Dionne, PK-4 guidance counselor kdionne@aos98schools.org

Sarah Gordon, 5-8 guidance counselor sgordon@aos98schools.org

Leanne Burnham 9-12 guidance counselor lburnham@aos98schools.org

Talking to Children

National Child Traumatic Stress Network offers [Talking to Children about the Shooting \(nctsn.org\)](https://www.nctsn.org). Shootings such as this tragedy evokes many emotions—sadness, grief, helplessness, anxiety, and anger. Children and adults are likely struggling with their thoughts and feelings about the stories and images of the shooting may turn to trusted adults for help and guidance.

Common sense media includes developmental language to help educators and parents address themes of violence in our world in an age appropriate way:

<https://www.common sense media.org/articles/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-violence-crime-and-war>

Resources for educators and parents to support children of different age levels manage feelings of anxiety and helplessness following a tragedy: [Helping Children Cope With Tragedy Related Anxiety | Mental Health America \(mhanational.org\)](https://www.mhanational.org/helping-children-cope-with-tragedy-related-anxiety)

US Department of Health and Human Services Tips for Talking to Children and Youth After Traumatic Events:

<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-talking-to-children-after-traumatic-event.pdf>

The National Association of School Psychologist provide a resource to help educators and parent reassure safety for our children:

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/school-violence-resources/talking-to-children-about-violence-tips-for-families-and-educators>

Mental Health First Aid

- Children and community members will be affected in different ways. We do not know how this event has affected people – directly and/or indirectly. Continue to assess the impact of the event on those around you.
- Be mindful of your own self-regulation to be able to assist your child in maintaining a level of safety and connection.
- If you or someone you know is in crisis, call 988.